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CHALLENGE

THE REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNIST NEWSPAPER OF PROGRESSIVE LABOR PARTY

volume 43 no. 12 | June 8, 2011 | suggested donation $.50

Pakistan's Sanitation Workers

Fighting Bosses and Open to PL Ideas



Pakistan, January 2011: Women Health Workers Demonstrated for Higher Wages.

PAKISTAN, May 13 — Sanitation workers are the most exploited workers in Pakistan. They live in miserable conditions with slave wages, no security, no pension and no benefits. Parents and children live together in small mud-made dwellings covered with leaves, with one room consisting of a kitchen, living and bedroom. Sanitation workers also suffer special prejudices — they are prohibited from eating or drinking with other people if they do not bring their own cups and dishes. Strikes have begun against these conditions.

They start work early morning and labor for 18 hours for slave wages, without proper equipment like gloves or boots. Permanent workers are paid only 5,000 Pakistani Rupees (PKR) (59 US$) per month; temporary workers get PKR 4,000 (47 US$). If they have an on-the-job accident, they cannot get medical treatment and can be fired anytime. Female domestic workers face violence and sexual attacks. There are no weekends or holidays in their lives —they live just to serve.

Many sanitation workers thus suffer from health problems produced by working conditions. Some suffer from blindness. Skin and breathing problems are very common but there is no free medical treatment or any other benefit. When sick they cannot remain in their small dwellings; if they do not work they cannot eat.

The sanitation workers are labeled "minorities." Their "representatives" in parliament are the wealthy who never visit their dwellings. The religious institutions are also silent about these workers' wretched exploitation. Both the politicians and religious officials just protect the interests of the rich bosses.



Pakistan, January 2011: Electric Supply Company Workers Demonstrated after 4500 workers were laid off.

Organizing A Union to Fight Back

A small Pakistani town contains 220 families (about 2,000 people). Many have been attacked by landowners, chasing them from temporary living areas. About five years ago, the workers formed the Sanitation Workers Association (SWA). They began organizing

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I.M.F. Boss's Rape Arrest Reflects Growing Imperialist Rivalry

Dominique Strauss-Kahn, the head of the I.M.F., has a long history of sexual assaults without any repercussions. But when he raped a West African hotel housekeeping worker in New York earlier this month, he was abruptly thrown in jail and charged with seven felony counts—but only because he had recently threatened U.S. monetary and imperial interests.

The racist rape of entire countries has been a chief purpose of the I.M.F since its creation in 1969. The agency imposes harsh, budget-slashing programs to impoverish and starve workers in less powerful capitalist nations and to safeguard profits for the U.S., European, and Asian investors that the I.M.F represents. Strauss-Kahn's downfall stems from sharpening competition among these imperialists, not from any concern for his victim on the part of U.S. rulers.

Strauss-Kahn's Biggest Crime: Allying with China

Strauss-Kahn's indictment, drawn up under Manhattan District Attorney Cyrus Vance, Jr., a U.S. imperialist blueblood, contains many lurid details. But Strauss-Kahn's most offensive act, to U.S. bosses, came last year in a speech in Washington. Britain's Guardian newspaper reported (2/10/11), "Strauss-Kahn... has called for a new world currency that would challenge the dominance of the dollar."

In the shadow of the White House and Pentagon, Strauss-Kahn was advancing anti-U.S. heresy. He proposed that world trade be conducted in a revived I.M.F.-sanctioned instrument called Special Drawing Rights (SDR), an interest-bearing international reserve asset created by the I.M.F. to supplement other reserve assets of member countries.

Last year, Strauss-Kahn urged that the I.M.F's "basket" money — composed of the dollar, the pound sterling, the euro and the yen — be broadened to include others such as the Chinese yuan. To expand SDR in this way would devalue the dollar and enable countries to buy SDR instead of U.S. treasury bonds. More significantly, the proposed use of this basket as the international currency of choice would threaten the dominance of the U.S. ruling class and enhance the influence of its chief economic rival, China.

In February, Strauss-Kahn publicly addressed this proposed change. Later that month, he appointed Zhu Min, deputy governor of the People's Bank of China, as his "special advisor." Two months after that, racist NYPD thugs were parading a handcuffed Strauss-Kahn through the streets.

U.S. Capitalists Capitalize on Strauss-Kahn's Scandal, Seek Control of I.M.F.

U.S. Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner demanded that Strauss-Kahn step down at once. He did, behind the prison bars of Rikers Island. Immediately, a former vice chairman of JPMorgan Chase, John Lipsky, took over as interim head of the I.M.F.

U.S. rulers, capitalizing on the temporary tenure of pro-U.S. leaders Sarkozy in France and Merkel in Germany, are now in a position to name the next long-term I.M.F chief. The New York Times, the leading mouthpiece of the same dominant, imperialist wing of U.S. capitalists that runs JPMorgan Chase, editorialized (5/21/11) about various pro-U.S. prospects: "Ms. [Christine] Lagarde, who would be the first woman to hold the job, has the experience and many other strong qualities. But there are other talented candidates to consider, including Tharman Shanmugaratnam, Singapore's finance minister and chairman of the I.M.F.'s financial committee, and Arminio Fraga Neto, a former head of Brazil's central bank."

French finance minister Lagarde, a Sarkozy ally, toiled for decades as a partner in Baker & McKenzie, the top U.S. law firm in the crucial Mideast-North Africa region. The bankers from Singapore and Brazil both belong to the Group of Thirty, a pro-U.S. global monetary policy forum founded by the Rockefeller Brothers Fund and chaired by ex-Chase Manhattan economist and Obama adviser, Paul Volcker. The Group of Thirty has been a leading advocate of "reform" of the I.M.F.

Obama & Co. believe that they've scored a double victory. Disgraced and under armed guard in New York, Strauss-Kahn had until recently led the field opposing Sarkozy in the coming presidential election in France. U.S. imperialists now have a better chance to sustain Sarkozy-style French cooperation in murderous, U.S.-led military action, like NATO's hellfire in Libya.

Capitalists rape workers by the billions every day. They exploit us with lousy pay, enforced by swelling racist unemployment. They kill and maim us through their police terror and wars. It is indeed high time for change. But we don't mean reshuffling bosses to suit one imperialist rival over another, as with the booting of Strauss-Kahn. Only communism can destroy the source of all of these assaults, the profit system itself.✪

The racist rape of entire countries has been a chief purpose of the I.M.F. The agency imposes harsh, budget-slashing programs to impoverish and starve workers in less powerful capitalist nations and to safeguard profits for the U.S., European, and Asian investors that the I.M.F represents.



OUR FIGHT

✮Progressive Labor Party (PLP) fights to destroy capitalism and the dictatorship of the capitalist class. We organize workers, soldiers and youth into a revolutionary movement for communism.

✮Only the dictatorship of the working class — communism — can provide a lasting solution to the disaster that is today's world for billions of people. This cannot be done through electoral politics, but requires a revolutionary movement and a mass Red Army led by PLP.

✮Worldwide capitalism, in its relentless drive for profit, inevitably leads to war, fascism, poverty, disease, starvation and environmental destruction. The capitalist class, through its state power — governments, armies, police, schools and culture — maintains a dictatorship over the world's workers. The capitalist dictatorship supports, and is supported by, the anti-working-class ideologies of racism, sexism, nationalism, individualism and religion.

✮While the bosses and their mouthpieces claim "communism is dead," capitalism is the real failure for billions worldwide. Capitalism returned to Russia and China because socialism retained many aspects of the profit system, like wages and privileges. Russia and China did not establish communism.

✮Communism means working collectively to build a worker-run society. We will abolish work for wages, money and profits. Everyone will share in society's benefits and burdens.

✮Communism means abolishing racism and the concept of "race." Capitalism uses racism to super-exploit black, Latino, Asian and indigenous workers, and to divide the entire working class.

✮Communism means abolishing the special oppression of women — sexism — and divisive gender roles created by the class society.

✮Communism means abolishing nations and nationalism. One international working class, one world, one Party.

✮Communism means that the minds of millions of workers must become free from religion's false promises, unscientific thinking and poisonous ideology. Communism will triumph when the masses of workers can use the science of dialectical materialism to understand, analyze and change the world to meet their needs and aspirations.

✮Communism means the Party leads every aspect of society. For this to work, millions of workers — eventually everyone — must become communist organizers. Join Us!

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CHALLENGE/DESAFIO (ISSN 0009-1049) published bi-weekly by Challenge Periodicals. One Year: $15. Six months: $10. Send address changes to CHALLENGE Periodicals, GPO Box 808 Brooklyn, NY 11202, June 8 2011. Volume 43, No. 12

Why Articles Are Not Signed

The fact that CHALLENGE/PLP articles are not signed grows from PLP's criticism of the cult of the individual in the former socialist Soviet Union and China. We do not want to encourage the possibility of building up a "following" around any particular individual. While an article may be written by one person, the final version is based on collective discussion and criticism. Many times this collective discussion even precedes an individual's writing of an article.

Fascist Bosses Grow in Brooklyn H.S.

DOE Tries to Suppress Fightbacks

BROOKLYN, MAY 23 — At Clara Barton High School, the Special Commissioner of Investigation (SCI) for the New York City School District has just completed an investigation that began in October. Assistant Principal Mims initially interrogated some students as they entered the school on a Monday after they had attended an October 2 rally in Washington, D.C. against budget cuts and for jobs. The SCI report finds that "Salak and Beckerman … recruited students to attend an unauthorized trip to a rally held in Washington, D. C."

In fact, this rally was on a Saturday. All the students went with parental permission. Several parents joined them. Everyone was on a bus organized and paid for by the United Federation of Teachers (UFT). There were thousands of students at this rally, many from NYC schools. Many unions and community organizations, including the UFT, sponsored this trip.

Yet Principal Forman maintains that "no private trips are allowed." We disagree. As Senator Eric Adams stated at a PTA meeting, outside of school and especially on weekends, parents are in charge of their children, not the DOE or Principal Forman.

Meanwhile, education at Barton is neglected by the administration:

- Haitian students get many of their history classes from teachers outside the Social Studies Dept.
- Monday afternoon teacher meetings are mostly a disorganized mess; hundreds of teacher hours are wasted.
- Class sizes are huge.
- Technology is totally outdated or missing; the TV/DVD/video setups are a mess.

This is also an anti-communist attack...The SCI and its servants...want to silence us. They won't.

The SCI investigation is a racist attack on our students in many ways. At many so-called 'elite' schools or suburban schools, which are mainly white, outside activities are encouraged. Students are allowed to expand their horizons and teachers are encouraged to help them. At Barton, the latest innovation by the administration is detention. Many students and staff feel that Barton is becoming more and more like a jail.

This is also an anti-communist attack. The SCI letter, for some reason, mentions "Challenge: the Revolutionary Communist Newspaper of the Progressive Labor Party." The Paper was "retrieved" from a student. From Paul Robeson to Langston Hughes to W. E. B. DuBois, communists have always been in the forefront in fighting racism and that is still the case. The SCI and its servants, like Principal Forman, want to silence us. They won't.

Why does Forman want to get rid of some of the best, most dedicated teachers in the school? Their Regents results are above the Brooklyn average. They sponsor after school clubs and spend countless other hours after school helping students. The DOE and principals like Forman want to frighten and silence anyone who fights back. Principal Forman is not an educator, he is an investigator. He is in line with the increased racist repression and control coming from the DOE. As the DOE prepares more budget cuts, including teacher layoffs, they want students and staff to be more compliant and timid. This is called fascism. They do virtually nothing to promote education at Barton. Now, with more cutbacks coming, they want to stop any kind of student-teacher-parent unity that could resist these cuts. More than ever we need to fight back, students, staff, and parents united!✪

Worker's Struggles Against Bosses's Impunity

Construction and landscaping bosses have sunk to a new low in hiring day laborers in New Jersey. Four or five times a year immigrant workers will put in weeks or even months on a job without receiving any money whatsoever! If they call their boss, they're told: "If you complain, you will get deported."

Near one muster zone, a non-profit organization provides families with information, referrals, parenting classes and general advocacy. Many concerned people have met there — including two organizations, a church and several attorneys — to be ready to do whatever it takes to get the workers their pay.

We had a phone conference, divided up the names of various bosses, and called them individually. In reaching out, we found that some folks were willing to go beyond phone calls and pay these bosses a visit—even to go in front of their houses and churches with picket signs.

This capitalist system allows freedom, but only for the bosses. They hire and fire at will, and pay below minimum wages (or at all), and contract under unsafe conditions for both "documented" and "undocumented" workers. They threatened to take one boss who owed over $2700 to court!

Because of our phone calls, the three workers received over half the money due to them. One worker came to our meeting the next week. He was promptly invited to May Day and given CHALLENGE so that he and his friends could know there is an alternative to the international wage slavery system. Meantime, we don't intend to give up our fight!✪

Jersey Red

Los Angeles: 388 Teacher Layoff Notices, More Fight Back Needed

Inglewood School District has sent layoff notices to 338 teachers, which is slightly more than half of the 655 teachers in this Los Angeles County city. The district tells us that some of us will have our notices rescinded once the District finds out exactly how big the cutbacks of state funds will be.

Inglewood is a working-class neighborhood and our students are overwhelmingly black and Latino. We've heard that the School Board is going to ask the state to waive the already high limit (32-34) on class size. Next fall, students will be packed in 40 or more to a class.

The Inglewood Teachers Association held a rally May 3, and is participating in a California Teachers Association rally in downtown LA May 13. But there is no talk of organizing a strike, no talk of calling on other unions and non-union workers to strike, no talk of organizing parents and students to support a strike.

That's what needs to happen, but the union leaders buy into the "share the sacrifice" ideology being pushed by all the politicians, from Obama on down. In fact, our union had phone banks to elect Jerry Brown, now the governor of California, whose budget cuts are responsible for these layoffs.

We need leadership with a different vision. A system that cannot give jobs to dedicated teachers, that cannot educate its youth, that pours money into imperialist wars and interest payments to banks, needs to be overthrown.✪

Dedicated Teacher



MAY DAY 2011

Why I Joined PLP

My introduction to PLP was through a professor at my college. She is the faculty advisor of a student club called "Pizza and Politics". One time, during a heated discussion, I adamantly proclaimed, "Capitalism doesn't exist anymore, capitalism was over when slavery was abolished." I was enlightened when they cleared up my misconception. Later, the same professor introduced me to PLP's ideas. I considered capitalism to be slavery. When I learned about the inner workings of capitalism I realized that it *is* very similar to slavery — wage slavery. More importantly, like slavery, I knew that capitalism is a system that has to go. Becoming a member of PLP enables me to join the fight against capitalism. We must end this cruel system and replace it with a better alternative: communism.

Secondly, when I began reading PLP's literature, my outlook on politics changed. I saw that the two-party electoral system and everything it entailed was a sham. When I became well versed in PLP's ideas, I began to discern vague rhetoric from substantial dialogue. "Globalization" translated into imperialism. "Education reform" meant "budget cuts," and "law enforcement" meant "the fascist state". It was like learning a second language, which guides my thought process now.

Finally, communism is a system I can wholly defend. The only other system I tried to defend in the past was Christianity, because I was indoctrinated to the bone! I grew up in a Caribbean home where religion was fed to me for breakfast, lunch and dinner. As I grew older and started to read about "Christianity and Colonization," I realized that my ancestors were enslaved in the name of Christianity. It was not important for me to defend Christianity anymore. Communism is something I see as imperfect but logical and progressive. PLP's political line is indeed what the workers of the world need to smash a system that cannot provide real solutions for unemployment, urban violence, poverty, and lack of healthcare, etc.

Having PLP responsibilities helped my practical work to fight for a workers' society instead of simply looking at communism in an abstract, philosophical way.

The more I have become involved with PLP by planning events, leafleting, organizing class struggle, and simply raising awareness about communist ideas, the more I feel empowered to know that I am involved in a very important struggle. Having PLP responsibilities helped my practical work to fight for a workers' society instead of simply looking at communism in an abstract, philosophical way.

I urge you to join us in the fight for communism, for all of the above reasons. Be assured that you would be making one of the best decisions of your life!

New Comrade

Proud to Learn About REAL May Day

May Day or as I knew it, Labor Day, has a different meaning than what I expected. I always thought of it as a holiday when everyone barbequed or took the day off from work and school. Once I got to New York, I found that May Day had a different meaning. People in red shirts were marching and chanting aloud against capitalism, racism, budget cuts, wars and poverty. I immediately joined them and felt like I was around people who were not afraid to speak out. It was a place where I belonged and a place where people of my age or older believed in the same thing I believed in. It reminded me of the 60's era. I was so proud of myself for experiencing what May Day really was about. I met wonderful courageous people who were part of the same fight I was.

When we got to the park, I was amazed at how many people celebrated May Day in New York! In Boston, it is not as important and people do not get together and celebrate the real meaning of May Day. Seeing all of those people made me think that in order for us to defeat this current system we must all unite. Although we want freedom and equality, we are still divided in lots of ways. The buffet and the entertainment were exciting, I was a little nervous when I read my poem on the stage, but I knew I was among my people and I did very well. Next year I plan to go back to New York and march. Hopefully, my friends and family will go with me. It is truly unfortunate for anyone to miss an opportunity to be a part of making a real change by not marching on this May Day.

Friend

47 Years of Inspiration..

I have experienced many inspiring events as a member of the PLP: selling the first issue of CHALLENGE in June, 1964; attending the first PLP convention in April, 1965; marching on PLP's first May Day in March, 1971, on the 100th anniversary of the Paris Commune; reading Road to Revolution 4 and the concept of no-intermediate-stages in the fight for communism; and attending last summer's world-wide PLP convention in New York City.

But now I have to add one more inspiring event to this list: reading last week's issue of CHALLENGE with its stories of May Day celebrations all over the world. For me, this was very meaningful. It is all too easy to become discouraged by the bosses' SEEMING "invincibility" and to forget that no matter how strong they APPEAR, in reality they are weak because capitalism cannot satisfy the needs of the working class. With patient work by committed comrades in the PLP, I am confident that our descendants will live in a COMMUNIST WORLD.

A comrade

'Passionate' About PLP

I attended PLP's May Day dinner in Los Angeles. I've been meeting with a group of CHALLENGE readers in our church for over a year but I had never seen other sections of PLP. It was refreshing to hear speakers who were as passionate as I am about the things that need to change in our society. Sometimes you think you are the only one that thinks that way. It made me feel a sense of relief that I am not alone in my thoughts about what needs to change and what we have to do to make the revolutionary movement go forward.

That it was young people expressing these thoughts was even more refreshing. In the 1960s, in Pittsburgh, I marched for jobs for black workers in the construction and other trades. It's fabulous to see young people taking up the cause. One young man gave a talk about the world situation that reflected the depth of PLP's analysis of what is going on.

Black worker in LA



Canada Preparing to Wage Imperialist Wars

Progressive Labor Party maintains that the primary contradiction in the world today is inter-imperialist rivalry, forecasting a period of increasing conflict among the world's imperialist powers.

This analysis has been corroborated by a surprising source, Radio Canada's scientific news program, "Les Années Lumière." On April 24, University of Quebec professor Yves Bélanger revealed that Canada has changed from a defensive to an offensive military policy.

The key evidence is the government's decision to replace its F-18 fighters with ultra-modern Lockheed Martin F-35s, at a cost of $16 billion. The decision remains top secret.

"It's quite difficult to establish Canadian [military] policy," Bélanger said. "We observe at present…a tendency to buy materiel that is conceived for combat,..not…for the defense of Canadian soil, and also conceived to be deployed."

"I presume that the Canadian government's intention is, ultimately, to give itself the capacity to intervene…in international missions…possibly… contributing to world stability."

But dialectics teaches that the world is constantly changing. In the present context, "contributing to world stability" is a euphemism for preventing change. In particular, it means preventing rising imperialists like China from threatening capitalism's established world order, or preventing occupied countries from resisting NATO forces.

"In the near future," Bélanger continued, "Canada is going to buy close-combat….armored vehicles that are midway between the armored personnel carriers that Canada presently has, and tanks. These are vehicles…able to penetrate cities and to conduct combat in cities…likely to be equipped with cannons…to obtain a higher level of precision, [and] accuracy in terms of firing..."

"The result," Bélanger said, "is that Canada will…[have] a capacity which better corresponds to the kind of combat configuration…in a city like Kabul or Kandahar."

He also said, "It requires big transport planes, and the Canadian government has just purchased [Boeing] C-17s, which…should make it possible to participate in rapid deployment operations."

So, Bélanger said all this shows "that the government's intention is to permit Canada, today, to stand out…in intervention missions..."

To make all this clear, Bélanger added that, in "the case of re-establishing peace, you intervene, and you impose, by force, a settlement of the conflict."

Obviously, whether the bosses "maintain peace" or "re-establish peace, that "peace" is always synonymous with the exploitation of the working class. Nevertheless, there is now clearly a qualitative difference in the military role Canada intends to play in the future.

So why has the Canadian government decided to change its military orientation? No belligerent dictator has seized power, nor has there been any internal change that explains this development. The answer must lie in the evolution of the world imperialist system. Canada's ruling class does not want to be left out in the coming re-division of the world.

The Radio Canada program also indicated that Canadian "democracy" bars any citizen input on military policy. Interviewer Janick Tremblay said, "We just tried to find out more about the…F-18s, and it was not possible to get an interview. So…it is improbable to speak about strategic orientation, especially in an electoral period." [Canada had a general election on May 2.]

"This is a very sensitive subject," Tremblay said, "including in academic circles, where one finds many research chairs financed by the federal government, specialists who are usually available, but who refused to be interviewed."✪

Greece: Rulers' Austerity Measures Fuel Anti-immigrant Attacks; Cloud Capitalist Crises

Athens, Greece — Fascists, cops and the media are attacking anyone they identify as an immigrant. In a classic example of divide and conquer, the Greek ruling class is seizing the "opportunity" presented by a man's stabbing by declaring that it was an immigrant from Africa or Asia who committed the murder.

Greek rulers are in a desperate crisis for survival. They have already gotten one IMF bailout that cost the Greek working class higher taxes, fewer jobs, and an austerity program that will ensure the profits of international capitalists who buy Greek sovereign debt. We are seeing capitalism in crisis resort to racist and fascist attacks to maintain its rule.

It is no accident that in the midst of massive strikes, protests and banks being smashed or set on fire, neo-Nazis have opened up a wholesale assault on the most vulnerable segment of the workers. Hiding behind a clamor of nationalism, they shout "Greeks for the Greeks" while attacking children and breaking into homes to attack any dark skinned or "foreign" looking families.

The racists are directly protected by the cops who swoop in to arrest or assault any anti-fascists attempting to protect the working class. Greek capitalists would love to continue their agenda against all immigrants in order to maximize their profits and divide the working class.

There have been examples of great heroism as dedicated anti-fascists have routed hordes of both fascists and cops. PL congratulates all who stand against fascism but, as history has shown, the grand working class struggle to defeat German and Italian fascism did not mean the end of the bosses' rule that creates racist and fascist oppression over and over again.

Greek workers need red leadership to develop the anti-racist struggles in defense of immigrants into a revolutionary communist movement that smashes capitalism once and for all.✪

Economic Crisis Hits Spain; Youth Rebel

Spain — Hundreds of thousands of young people have taken to the streets protesting the effects of capitalism, almost half of whom are unemployed. Capitalism is causing the crisis in Spain. The socialist government did what every capitalist/socialist government does: betray the working class and make the rich richer. Socialism has never and will never be able to meet the needs of the working class or lead to Communism. It was the socialist government that carried out the austerity program. The International Monetary Fund (the world's ruling class' main mouthpiece) demanded these massive budget cuts that attack the working class. The Socialists are planning yet another attack in August.

The protests are coming within the context of antagonism to Spain's elections and are directly influenced by the "Arab Spring." This is the moniker that the bourgeois press has dubbed the uprisings and protests that have engulfed North Africa, the Arabian Peninsula, and Asia. In sharp contrast to Yemen and Syria, when the Spanish government declared the protests illegal, and the working class stayed out in defiance of the law, Spain's ruling class did not use violence on the protestors.

The Western European ruling class needs to preserve the illusion of democracy and free speech for now. These protests do not threaten the ruling class' hold on the working class, but they are inspiring to the world's working class. Workers from Spain that immigrated to other countries organized workers in those countries to protest at the local Spanish embassies.

The protests are saturated with reformist politics, demanding democracy, and are organizing assemblies that are attempting to create a place where politics can be worked out and the protests can be organized. Instead of condemning capitalism, the root cause of the problems affecting the working class in Spain and around the world, the list of demands are all based upon the illusion that the problems are caused by a mismanagement of government and some greedy bankers. These protests can move to the right or the left, as the working class is angry and lacking mass communist leadership.

It is inspiring to watch young people parallel the events at Tahir Square and sleep in various city squares in protest of the effects of capitalism. But, these protests alone will not threaten the root cause of the cancer infecting the world, causing unemployment, and threatening to bring even more attacks. PLP in Spain is doing what it can to bring our ideas to these protests and build a fighting Party that will advance past the reformist politics promulgating the working class.✪

LETTERS

We encourage all CHALLENGE readers to send in concise letters and articles about their experiences fighting the bosses around the world.

Trip to Port Au Prince on May Day

The tap-tap (taxi) heading into town, maneuvered great wide gouges in the road still filled with last night's downpour. Up and over a great hump-back of earth and rock that had poured down from the hills to form an undulating path to the next real piece of roadbed. The tap-tap, almost at a forty-five degree angle, roared just to hold its position and move forwards slowly while the driver drove to the next fault. Along the road suddenly a dump of metal and garbage that has grown to cover the side of the road.

Women were walking to market with baskets of vegetables on their heads. One woman drove a laden donkey down the side of the road. People walking everywhere — moving constantly. Traffic chaos — cars avoiding road ruts and each other — no traffic controls. Religious and politically angry slogans on the walls and tap-taps everywhere. Finally, down into the town known as Prince.

We sat on the back of the tap-tap on two wide planks fixed on either side of the pickup truck walls. Over us, a light, open, metal covering for the sun and rain. We looked out at the passing scene of tent cities still 16 months after the earthquake. Housing for almost one million Haitians. These tents were crammed together, with a rounded plastic tarpaulin serving as both roof and walls. A split in their sides leading to narrow paths crowded in the midday sun. No pushing here. No angry shouts. Dignity and patience abide. On the sides of some of the tents given by different nations: the flag of the People's Republic of China, the United States stars and stripes, the circle of the European Union. The wealthy imperialists of the world showing how "kind" they are to those bereft of real housing. The clash of imperialist capitalism at the level of a tent city. The people are patient. They stand and talk. Some are working.

Broken houses, even the presidential palace, still in ruins. We wondered, "Is it a move to show the masters who are supposedly the servants of the people living amid the same squalor as others?" But the overmasters in Washington and Wall Street live fat on the people's misery, and other big shots go to Miami. We wondered with so many hundreds of thousands of people – so energetic, so willing to create – how long it would take to transform the whole of Haiti in a worker-run world when they rid themselves of the leeches.

We talked about struggle, dignity, and what was necessary for life as we drove down streets crowded with people. All of a sudden – tanks, armored cars, and men – rifles at the ready – hanging out of the sides of their armored cars, peering at the people. Some sit at the top of their war vehicles. What is this? An invading army come to destroy? On the side of the vehicles a big UN sign – the United Nations – riding machines that came from the millions of pounds, dollars, etc. from the working people of the world to stifle other working people. If workers in the U.S. knew how their donations are being used they would surely scream. They were here, to be sure that the people don't drag out the wealthy and hang them from the stunted trees by their heels.

The masses look at these soldiers as the heroes of the wealthy. The United Nations organization (MINUSTAH) seeks to grasp a piece of the imperialized pie. Finally the tap-tap has come to a stop in front of the hotel. Not much to look at in the front – just a name on the door itself. On entering one can see that dirt, breakdown, and confusion had ended. We were here to participate in a discussion of the reconstruction of Haiti. But that's for another story.

Red Traveler

Organizing for Communism IS a Hard Road to Hoe

As a PLP comrade who spent decades organizing in a hospital, I was inspired by Med Red's letter in CHALLENGE 4/27/11. "No choice but to be in it for the long haul" faces us not just in organizing on the job but in our personal lives as well. Capitalism's crap hits us throughout life, even after we can't work anymore. Just ask the millions of retired and disabled workers living in poverty.

Your goals, Med Red, of relying on an expanding CHALLENGE network and building a social-political base outside of work are correct. I found it important to look hard at the workers around me and try to deeply understand their lives and their outlooks. This helped me make connections with them.

We had a network of "regular" CHALLENGE readers and distributors as well as a list of "sometimers" who agreed to read an article every so often that we thought might be of particular interest. The "sometimers" included some folks you might not think of as CHALLENGE reading candidates, but they damn well welcomed it and discussed the stuff that interested them. Later, some of these same folks defied our union leaders to support a PLP-led contract demanding "No cuts to pay for the Iraq Oil War".

Organizing social-political activities — base building — can be a challenge. You really have to be creative and think big and small: lunches with ones and twos or more; after-work activities; food-shopping together; cabarets. It helps to think outside the box. For example, an invitation from some of my female coworkers led to years of lunchtime meetings in the "ladies' locker-room" where I, a man, was accepted and where the bosses never thought to look for me.

I do think we need a perspective on the "hard road to hoe" aspect. Wider wars and deepening fascism and racism will make our travails today pale in comparison. Despite all the so-called hardships of Party organizing, I learned to make deep friendships with many different people, plus I learned a bit about fighting capitalism. These things enriched my life — probably more than my organizing enriched the Party!

When my disabled wife was recently denied Medicare coverage, the decades of base-building and organizing class struggle gave me the skills, conviction and persistence to challenge. With the help of folks from my neighborhood and from my days in the union, we overturned Medicare's decision, despite even the Medicare advocates telling me that we would never win!

Fight on, Med Red, and I look forward to reading more of your experiences in CHALLENGE.

A retired and disabled med red

Put Communist Equality First!

On May Day, a PLP comrade and I marched in Stockton, California. Our leaflet in English and Spanish was titled 'March for Equality on May Day.' I believe the idea of a society based on equality strikes a cord with most workers and students. We need to start putting the idea of communist equality first.

In Stockton, we are involved in reformist organizing for "peace and justice" and "single-payer healthcare." We are used to presenting the ills of capitalism and the reformist measures to combat them. But under capitalism, reforms can and are taken back.

We need to give a revolutionary communist perspective from the beginning. At a gut level, I believe workers and students want to hear about a society based on workers sharing in times of hardship and prosperity. This is something millions can be won to fight for! On to communist equality and a better world.

Comrade from Stockton



Pakistan

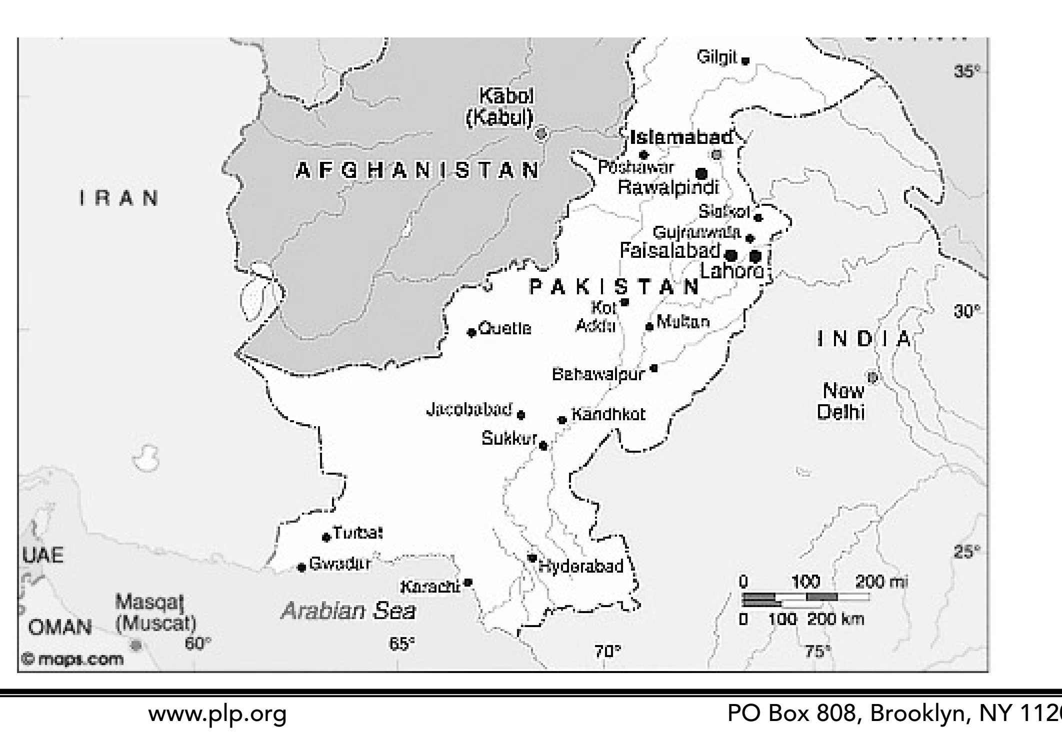
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strikes and sit-ins to get a piece of land on which to live. Despite brutal torture and starvation they maintained these strikes and won a 15x15-yard piece of land for each family. However, this land is about 1.6 miles away from the town and has no electricity, water or road, making it difficult to reach the town where they work. Of course, without water and electricity they cannot live there. They demanded infrastructure but the administration refused, saying the government has no money. We must organize strikes and militant actions against this special type of fascism.

After the October 2005 earthquake, the SWA won an allotment of 57 houses but these houses cannot resist severe weather, another example of the corruption of the politicians and authorities. Workers are organizing a strike against the district administration which is controlled by corrupt politicians.

PLP is struggling with these workers to understand that without smashing the exploitative capitalist system, workers cannot rid our class of this poverty and homelessness. A comrade and a few friends of the Party have distributed a leaflet linking this misery facing these sanitation workers to the need for a communist revolution to change the situation.

Such an international communist revolution is no easy task; it needs the firm commitment of workers to an international communist party, PLP.✪



Book Review: *'The New Jim Crow-Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness'*

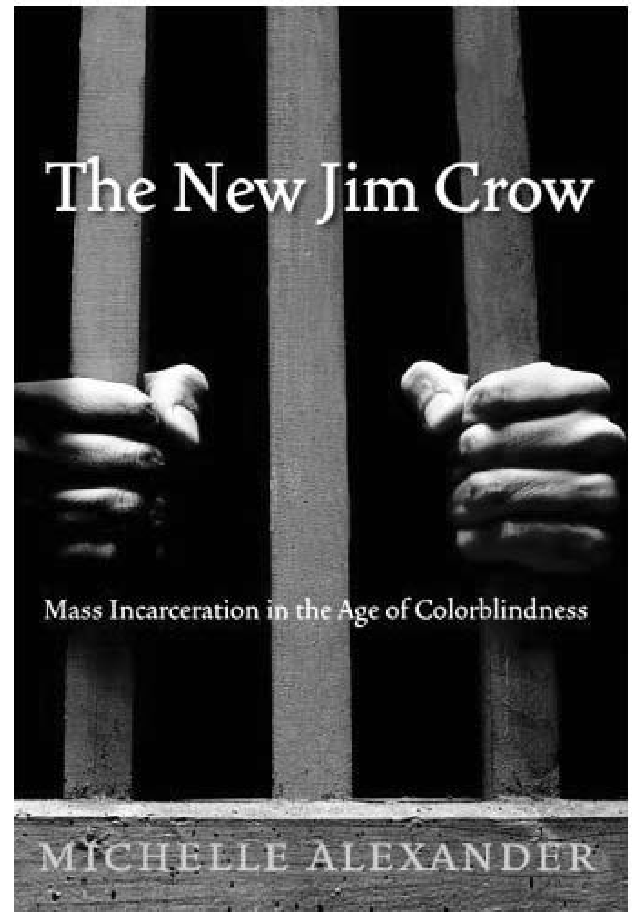
For those who want more evidence that the U.S. is a fascist country, read Michelle Alexander's new book, "The New Jim Crow, Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness." It exposes how the U.S. criminal "justice" system works to incarcerate, stigmatize, and isolate masses of black and Latino males as a new form of social and political control.

The U.S. has the highest rate of incarceration in the world, surpassing Russia, China and Iran, and imprisons a larger percentage of its black population than South Africa did during apartheid.

Since President Reagan began the "war on drugs" in 1982, the U.S. penal population has exploded from 300,000 to more than two million, with drug convictions accounting for most of the increase. The U.S. has the highest rate of incarceration in the world, surpassing Russia, China and Iran, and imprisons a larger percentage of its black population than South Africa did during apartheid. Although the current system of "justice" is theoretically colorblind or race-neutral, ninety percent of those sentenced to prison for drug violations in many states are black or Latino. Thus the New Jim Crow is born.

The majority of those arrested are not charged with serious offenses. Arrests for marijuana possession accounted for nearly 80% of the increase in drug arrests in the 1990's. The percentage of those going to prison, instead of dismissal, community service, or probation, has quadrupled. This has resulted in the most unprecedented prison-building boom ever seen in the world. At the end of 2007, more than 7 million people, or one in every 31 adults, were in prison, on probation, or on parole.

In 1988, the federal government made available millions of dollars in grant money to local and state law enforcement agencies willing to wage this racist war on drugs. The Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) offered free training, intelligence, and technical support to state highway patrol agencies. The Pentagon has also offered its expertise in warfare to more than 11,000 domestic police agencies in all fifty states; 253 aircraft, along with UH-60 Blackhawk & UH-1 Huey helicopters, 7,856 M-16 rifles, 181 grenade launchers, 8,131 bulletproof helmets, and 1,161 pairs of night-vision goggles. The millions of dollars from the federal government have also resulted in the proliferation of military style Special Weapon and Tactics (SWAT) teams. In 1972 there were a few hundred SWAT raids. In 2001 there were 40,000.



In 2000, Human Rights Watch reported that African Americans were being arrested and imprisoned at unprecedented rates even though data showed that blacks were no more likely to commit drug crimes than whites. In fact, most of the drug users and dealers are white. But because of institutional racism, the police, prosecutors, and judges imprison blacks Latinos at disproportionate and record rates.

The author believes that to change the New Jim Crow a "radical restructuring of our society and a radical restructuring of our approach to racial justice advocacy is in order." But she doesn't recognize that racism is an integral part of capitalism, and that it cannot be eliminated until capitalism is destroyed and replaced by a communist, truly colorblind society. Nevertheless, this book is well worth reading.✪

RED EYE ON THE NEWS

Below are excerpts from mainstream newspapers that may be of use for our readers. Abbreviations: NYT=New York Times, GW=Guardian Weekly, LAT=Los Angeles Times

Digitization can help fascists swoop

GW, 5/20 — Britain's largest police force is using software that can map nearly every move suspects and their associates make in the digital world, prompting an outcry from civil liberties groups.

The Metropolitan police has bought Geotime, a security programme used by the U.S. military, which shows an individual's movements and communications with other people....A partner at Christian Khan Solicitors, which represents several protests in cases against the Metropolitan police, said: "This latest tool could be used in a wholly invasive way and…impede the activities of a democratic protesters."

Big army needed for U.S. Big Biz

Creators.com: Robert Scheer — …Tuesday's Wall Street Journal headlined "Big U.S. Firms Shift Hiring Abroad."

…Tax breaks…leaving some corporations…to pay no taxes at all, were supposed to lead to job creation, but just the opposite has occurred. As the WSJ put it, the multinational companies "cut their work forces in the U.S. by 2.9 million during the 2000s while increasing employment overseas by 2.4 million.

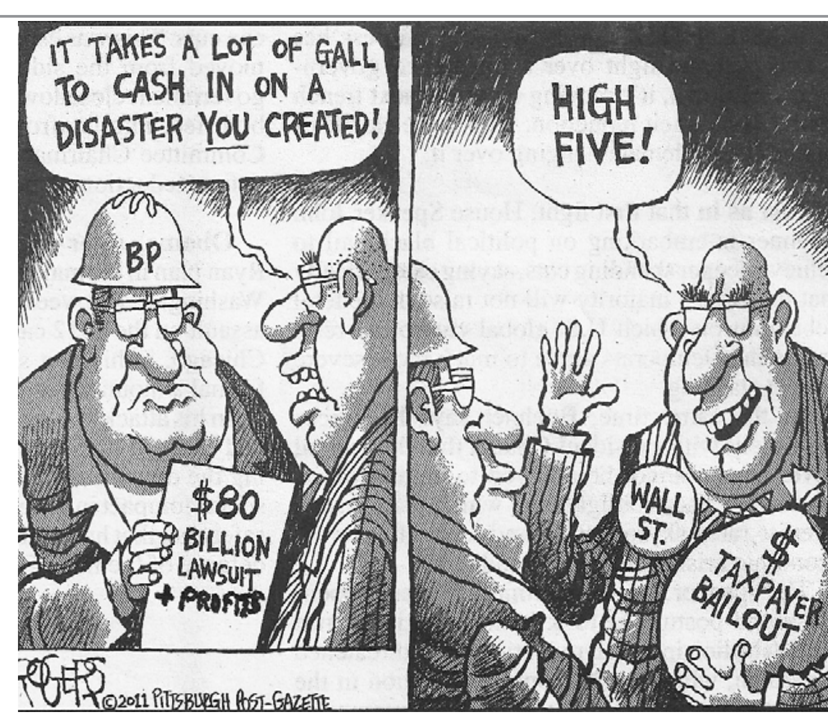
….When those corporations run into trouble overseas because of financial hustles or hostile locals and need the diplomatic and military might of the U.S. government to protect their interests abroad, it is again the U.S. taxpayer who must pay to maintain this new world order.

…More than half of all discretionary spending…is accounted for by defense spending.

That defense spending to support a massive network of military bases and deployed weapons and troops is key to establishing an order in which the interests of American corporations are attended to.

Blackwater founder hired to protect UAE

AM NY, 5/16 — The crown prince of Abu Dhabi has hired the founder of private security firm Blackwater Worldwide to set up an 800-member battalion of foreign troops for the United Arab Emirates… The unit being formed by Erik Prince's new company, Reflex Responses, reportedly would receive $529 million to thwart internal revolt and conduct special operations.



Israel stifles criticism by Jews

GW: Gary Younge — Finally, there is the insidious role Israel has attempted to play as ideological gatekeeper for acceptable political behavior among Jews. The attempt to tarnish any criticism of Israel, regardless of its merits, as unjust is untenable; to castigate them as un-Jewish is deplorable. "What saddens me today is that any Jew who speaks out with an independent voice, especially with the conduct of the state of Israel, is regarded as a self-hating Jew"…

Multinationals wink at exploitation

GW 5/6 — In China last May, seven young Chinese workers producing Apple iPads for consumers across the globe took their own lives….One year on, an investigation by two NGOs reveals that many workers making iPhones and iPads for world markets are exploited and living a dismal life.

…Interviews with mainly migrant employees and managers have laid bare a world of work that would be considered shocking in the west.

While Apple says it expects high standards from suppliers, its own audit reports suggest that fewer than one in three supplier factories are obeying the rules on working hours. The audits also show that 30% broke rules on wages and benefits, while 24% were in breach of strict rules on involuntary labor.

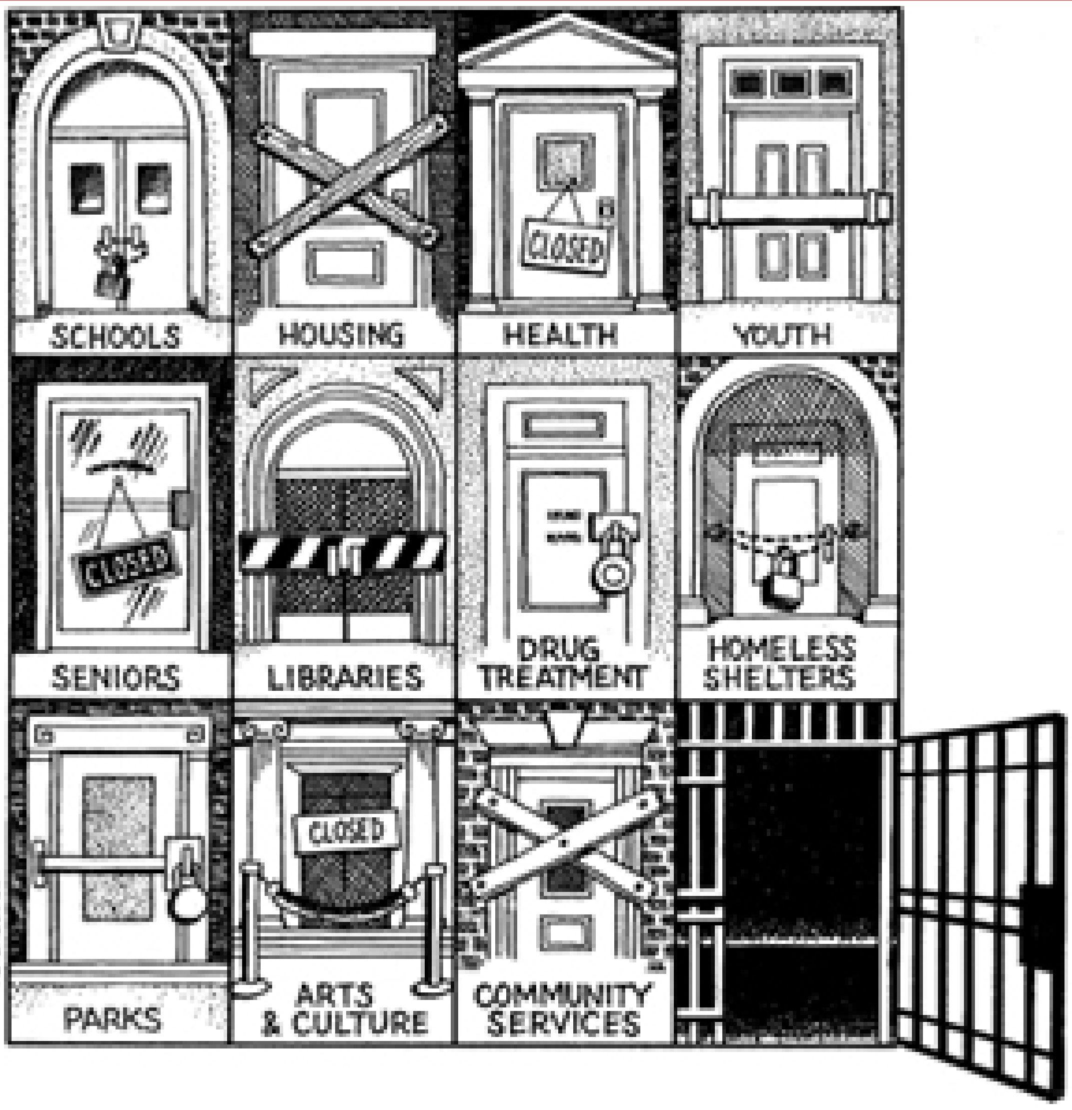
Schools breaking immigration law

NYT, 5/7 — Federal officials [said]…it was against the law for education officials to seek information that might reveal the immigration status of children applying for enrollment.

Civil liberties advocates and others have complained in recent months that many school districts are seeking children's immigration papers as a prerequisite for enrollment…. "We have become aware of student enrollment practices that may chill or discourage the participation, or lead to the exclusion, of students based on their or their parents' or guardians' actual or perceived…immigration status."

MORE ITEMS AVAILABLE AT WWW.PLP.ORG

Big Bosses' Nationwide Assault on Schools...
Aim – More Racism, Bigger Lies



Every time workers turn around, it seems we face a new attack from school bosses who claim to promote students' interests. Closing schools, firing teachers, imposing more high-stakes exams, making graduation more difficult--all these are fed to us as part of a recipe to "improve" education. Even budget cuts that savagely reduce resources are put forward as opportunities to help our young people!

Republicans and Democrats across the country, from Obama down to local boards of education, are united in a coordinated effort to cut budgets. NYC Mayor Bloomberg's attitude typifies the billionaire mindset that guides policy in the US: " In fact, it's healthy to go and say let's cut a little bit and force the principals and the teachers and the administrators to say, 'Is this program worth it?' "

Bloomberg's dismissive tone is disgusting enough on its own. Coupled with the fact that he's speaking of a city where over 85% of the students are black or Latino, the racism he exhibits is criminal and at the same time infuriatingly typical. And this was the bosses' attitude before the recent economic crisis hit. Since then, expanding imperialist war and evaporating paper wealth has driven the U.S. ruling class into a frenzy of budget cuts. Forty-four states out of fifty anticipate budget shortfalls for 2012, totaling $112 billion (Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, 2011). Meanwhile, roughly a trillion dollars has been spent on Mid-East wars since 9/11.

These cuts are about more than money. They are about fear and control. When teachers see their job security eroding, they are more easily whipped into line to peddle and defend the bosses' lies. This fear can intimidate students, parents, and teachers from fighting back against the school system's racist neglect and miseducation.

Working class unity is vital to our defense. One key to bosses' "education reform" strategy is the shutting down of "failing schools" so that they can open new or reorganized ones: old wine in new bottles. This amounts to a cover for firing teachers and shuffling kids around so nobody takes responsibility for them. Workers and youth must shut down these failing school systems with mass walkouts and strikes. With the leadership of PLP, these struggles could become schools for communism by turning defensive fight-backs against capitalism into an offensive class war for the future that our children deserve — communism.

Let's look at why the bosses' schools can never provide what the working class needs.

Public education, like all institutions under capitalism, is set up for most students to fail. Those who can afford private schooling get small classes, one-to-one tutoring, and excellent facilities. The public schools provide such amenities only for the few students that they are funneling to help perpetuate the ruling class.

The system will not devote resources to students who will graduate into an economy that has no jobs for them. Capitalism's inability to provide jobs for all workers means that most working-class students sit in over-crowded classrooms with out-of-date textbooks and few if any science labs. These schools have two purposes: to develop workers for the massive low-wage sector of the 21st-century economy, and to produce the foot soldiers for the bosses' 21st-century wars.

Good teachers find these working conditions revolting. Some quit in frustration; others are driven out by administrators who defend the status quo. And many who remain come to accept and reinforce the message that a certain percentage of their students just won't "make it."

It's no wonder, then, that cynical politicians exploit this crisis and mobilize mass anger against "overpaid" teachers. Even so, there are effective, pro-student teachers in every school. These teachers must choose between allying with the anti-student ideology of the teachers unions and their Democratic Party bosses or uniting with students and parents to struggle against the system that sets them up to fail.

Within the world of education reform, even bourgeois theorists admit that measures like "data-driven planning" or "differentiated instruction" will fail if students' individual needs are not consistently addressed. It's common sense that racism and poverty, the by-products of capitalism, increase children's needs at school. But as capitalist institutions, schools will never be able to fully address these needs for all students, despite the best efforts of dedicated teachers. Any child can learn, but capitalism is not designed to teach every child. Under these conditions,an angry child is showing signs of consciousness, not a "behavioral problem."

When students don't succeed in their schools, they need communist leadership to learn to blame the system. They need to reject the ideology of capitalist culture: that if you don't succeed, it is because you weren't smart enough or didn't work hard enough.

Schools form the foundation for the structure of capital's domination over our lives. Teachers can choose to side with students and parents and resist this domination. As war and economic crises intensify, the bosses' attacks on the schools will also intensify, making learning and teaching harder. PLP has a long history of organizing struggles small and large against racism in the school system and building a base for communist revolution. Join us.✪

Other Big Lies That The Bosses' Schools Help Defend and Promote:

The 20-year, intensifying U.S. war in the Mid-East is about stopping terrorism or spreading democracy--about anything except control of oil.

"Shared sacrifice" will fix the economy.

Women are slowly but surely moving toward equality with men.

Past communist revolutions have led to the greatest catastrophes in human history.

Racism has been defeated and is a thing of the past.